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James W. Silver to Mrs. Graham, 10 December 1963

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December 10, 1963

Mrs. Katherine Graham
The Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Graham:

It has been some time since you were kind enough to have Bill and me to lunch. This was one of the real highlights of my trip east. Incidentally, when Bill called home last week, his mother asked about whether she could have seen him on television at the Capitol and he told us that he had been assigned as a bodyguard for DeGaulle. So he was in the middle of things.

I did tell you at the luncheon that I would gather up some of the papers put out by Hazel Brannon Smith and send them to you. I have finally got around to doing that and you will find them in this package. Just how representative they are I am not sure (I read her Northside Reporter only) but you will quickly see that she is not representative of Mississippi.

I know that Mrs. Smith has been on the verge of bankruptcy for a very long time. How she has kept going at all has been beyond my comprehension. You will see that her papers have no great amount of paying advertising. In any case, the one thing I am positive about is that if she stops publishing these four papers, the loss to Mississippi will be absolutely irreparable. There is no one quite like her in the state. Her papers are now widely read. There must be a turning point in Mississippi's conduct one of these days (or years) and if Hazel Brannon Smith is not here, that day will be postponed almost indefinitely.

I am not presumptuous enough to propose anything. All I know is that she needs to be kept going. If you are concerned, as I think you are, it does seem to me that you might find a way to send someone responsible to Lexington to find out the true state of affairs. And procede from there.

In any case, Bill and I did enjoy our meeting with you and your staff. I was sorry that pneumonia was about to take me over at the time but I almost forgot it for that pleasant hour or so.

Sincerely,

James W. Silver